

NHS Chorley and South Ribble CCG and NHS Greater Preston CCG

Brief Guide to Procurement for Providers

Procurement regulations require that some commissioning decisions made by the CCGs will result in healthcare services being procured within the open market. This has led to a more competitive environment for healthcare providers (including both NHS providers and Independent providers).

Some providers will have more experience of the procurement process than others. For any providers going through the process here is some key advice to consider:

- Procurement opportunities that are going out to the open market will be published in Contracts Finder and also where appropriate, a Contract Notice will additionally be placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). It is advised that providers regularly check Contracts Finder for new opportunities. The link for Contracts Finder can be found on the CCGs website.
- The majority of public sector procurements will be conducted through an e-tendering portal. Providers must become familiar with the functionality of the e-tendering portal used by the CCGs to ensure bids are submitted correctly and in a timely manner. The CCGs use a system called Bravo. Please see the web link below for more information:
[Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit eSourcing Portal](#)
- For a procurement opportunity read all the procurement documentation that is provided and read the instructions carefully. Bids can be rejected for simple reasons that can easily be avoided for example one section being left blank or a submission being received after the deadline.
- As part of the procurement process there will be an opportunity to ask any clarifications that a provider may have. This option can be used to ask questions regarding the process and the service being commissioned. Use this facility to clarify any points that are unclear as basing a submission on assumptions could lead to a poorer quality bid.

- Providers need to familiarise themselves with the evaluation criteria set. If there are minimum requirements set, providers need to ensure that they can demonstrate that they can meet them.
- Take note if the questions have been weighted as this will indicate the importance of the questions.
- Take note of the word limits set. This provides an indication of the detail expected from providers in their responses. If the word limit is not utilised this may suggest that the response is not detailed enough. On the other hand if a response exceeds the word limit then in most cases any words over the limit will be discounted.
- The person writing the bid does not necessarily need to be an expert bid writer; however they do need to be a subject matter expert. If providers are asked to relate their answers to the service specification or specific business requirements then ensure that the answers reflect this.
- Providers should not assume prior knowledge is used by the evaluators. Any prior knowledge of a provider cannot be used within the evaluation, only the information in the written bid can be evaluated and information provided in an interview/presentation if this is also incorporated into the evaluation criteria.
- Allow enough time to complete the bid. It is not advisable to attempt to submit the bid too close to the deadline. It is common for providers to fail to submit a bid before the deadline if they attempt to submit a bid within the last couple of hours and they then experience technical difficulties at this late stage.